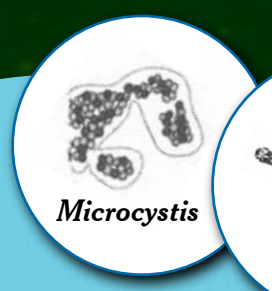
ALGAE BLOOMS IN OREGON

What is this stuff?

Algae are tiny, harmless organisms that live naturally in water. A harmful algae bloom (HAB), is actually made of cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue-green algae. Some cyanobacteria species create toxins that can make people and pets sick.

So, what's the problem? HABs can:

- Create toxins that can cause illness in humans and animals
- Pollute Oregon lakes and other fresh waters with scums
- Limit recreational activities in lakes, reservoirs and rivers
- Cause challenges for public water suppliers including taste and odor problems and water filtration difficulties



Common cyanobacteria that make up HABs in Oregon

Why are HABs a health concern?

- Water contact can cause skin irritation or rash
- Swallowing water can result in diarrhea, cramps, vomiting and dizziness
- More severe reactions occur when large amounts of water are swallowed
- Children and pets are at the greatest risk

How can I keep my family and pets safe?

- Do not wade, swim or water ski in waters that have signs of an algae bloom
- Never drink lake or river water
- If you decide to eat fish from affected waters, remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking
- Never cook with natural water from areas suspected to have a harmful algae bloom
- If you or your pet becomes ill, seek medical or veterinary attention immediately

When in doubt, stay out!

Know the signs of an algae bloom. Don't go in water that is foamy, scummy, thick like paint, pea-green, blue-green or brownish red.

Learn more about HABs at healthoregon.org/hab or call 1-877-290-6767.

Oregon Health Authority